



MATTHEW iv. 10.

*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,
and him only shalt thou serve.*



He unwearied Endeavours of the *Romish* Party to make Profelytes to their Profession, and the Success they have met with in several Parts of this Kingdom, must raise a real Concern in all who have a just Value for their civil and religious Rights. A late insolent (though blessed be God an unsuccessful) Attempt to impose upon us one nursed up in all the Superstitions of *Rome*, should put every *British* Protestant upon their Guard, nay, incline them to encourage every Design formed to prevent the Spread of their pernicious Errors. Agreeable to this View a Charity-School has been erected in *Southwark*, to which your favourable Regard is now desired. On such an Occasion it may

not be unsuitable to endeavour the Establishment of your Minds, in a Point of as great Consequence, as any debated betwixt us and the Church of *Rome*; namely, the proper Object of divine Worship. For that Purpose I shall consider the Words read as giving a very distinct Direction in that Affair; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

The Occasion of this Reply to the Prince of Darkness was, the impudent Proposal made by him to our Saviour, that he would fall down and worship him, as the Condition of receiving all the Glories of this World from him. With Scorn our Saviour treats the wild Project. Get thee hence Satan, thy Insolence is intolerable, and thy Proposal directly opposite to the Command of God: For it is written, *For thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

God is the only proper Object of divine Worship.

In discoursing upon this important Truth,

Ist. We shall enquire into the Nature of divine Worship.

II^d. Prove that God is the only proper Object of it.

III^d. Shew the Obligations we are under thus to serve him.

Ist. We

Ist. We are to enquire into the Nature of divine Worship. The *Romanists* have furnished us with some curious Distinctions upon that Head, not to be found in the Word of God. They speak of supreme and subordinate Worship: They distinguish between *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*. The former they appropriate to the most high, and the latter to Saints and Angels; nay, they have found out a *υπερδουλεία*, which is peculiar to the Virgin *Mary*, and Christ's human Nature. The promiscuous Usage of the two former Words in the sacred Writings forbid any such Distinction, and the last is a meer Fiction of their own, without the least Shadow of Foundation in the holy Scriptures.

Religious Worship implies a supreme Regard to the Object of it, and admits of no Subordination. The highest Expressions of our Reverence, Affection and Confidence is required in it. An inferior Respect is an Indignity.

If God is not honoured as the most excellent of Beings, as the Fountain of all Blessings, as our chief Good, he is not honoured at all.

Hereby it is very evidently distinguished, from that civil Regard, which we pay to our Fellow Creatures. Our Thankfulness to God as the first Cause and sovereign Disposer of all Blessings, does not discourage our Gratitude to our immediate Benefactors. But
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is there not a plain Difference? The one we respect as a kind Instrument of conveying to us Benefits; the other we reverence as the most excellent Being and Original of every good and every perfect Gift. All Kinds of religious Worship are as peculiar to God, as civil Respects are to Men, or the highest Degree of civil Honour to a sovereign Prince; must it not be an Encroachment upon the divine Right or Prerogative to offer it to any other? Hath not the God of Truth declared, *He will not give his Glory to another*;^a Can any deny that a supreme Regard to God is essential to all divine Worship, which is immediately offered up unto him? Now if it is an essential Qualification, must not that Worship that is destitute of it be acknowledged of a different Kind, not properly divine? But our Saviour's Reply will decide the Point in Debate. For you may observe, he absolutely rejects the Worship of any other Being together with the supreme Being; what our Saviour condemns is not the renouncing the Worship of God, for the Worship of Creatures. This the Devil did not tempt him to, but to pay divine Homage to another, though we shall continue to worship him.

The *Jews* had their false Gods, but even then did not absolutely renounce the Worship of the God of *Israel*.

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The Heathens acknowledged their *Jupiter* as supreme, though they worshipped many inferior Deities: But this our Lord's Reply forbids, our serving or worshipping any other. Is it not evident from thence he looked upon that Homage as peculiar to the most high, because claimed by him? To join any other with him is Idolatry, because contrary to his solemn Prohibition, not only in the first Commandment, but in various other Places of the five Books of *Moses*.

Has not the Majesty of Heaven an absolute Right to direct his own Worship? It is plain our Saviour thought so.

It is further observable by our Lord's Answer all Creatures are equally excluded, and him only shalt thou serve: Him, and none besides him, whether they be good or bad Spirits. For it was not objected to the Proposal Satan made, that he was a wicked and apostate Spirit, a Rebel against Heaven, and therefore he would not bow before him: No, his Reason is plainly exclusive of all created Being.

Nay, this Reply of our Saviour's does expressly appropriate all Kinds of religious Worship to God alone.

Here are no scholastick Distinctions so much as intimated; the apostate Spirit only desires an inferior kind of Homage, as one into whose Hands the Kingdoms of this World were given, and who had by Commission the
Disposal

Disposal of its Glory; his Proposal only implies a sort of subordinate Homage, he would be content with any Degree of Reverence, whether absolute or relative, whether supreme or subordinate, whether terminative or transient. If our Lord would fall down and worship him it would be sufficient. His not condescending in any Degree, teaches us to keep at the utmost Distance from any such Homage; for it seems as if the external Act was only required, which our Lord absolutely refuses, thereby discouraging every Appearance of such Homage to Creatures. For any to pretend this was only with Reference to evil Spirits, is trifling with our Saviour's Words: There is no Limitation expressed in them; the Reason alledged stands as good against one as the other, for he is the Lord thy God.

Good Spirits have no more Claim to that Character than bad ones: Either our Lord's Reply was proper, or it was defective and impertinent; to suppose the latter is to insult the Wisdom of God; to allow the former, is to grant what we desire. Thus the Nature of divine Worship, as confirmed by our Saviour's Answer, has been represented.

II^d. We are to prove that God is the only proper Object of divine Worship.

If the Answer of our Saviour is not accounted sufficient for that Purpose, various
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Arguments may be brought for the evincing of that Truth, as

1st The *Mosaic* Constitution confines the *Jewish* Worship to the One God, the Lord *Jehovah*, who created the Heavens and the Earth.---When the Law was given at Mount *Sinai*, the First Precept, writ by the Finger of God upon the Tables of Stone, was this:---*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,---or besides me*, as it is rendered by the *Septuagint*.---The plain Sense of which is universally allowed to be, that they were to worship no other God, but the Lord *Jehovah*. There is but One true God, and, in a strict Sense, they can have no other Gods, because there are no other to be had; but whatever Beings are worshipped, that Regard gives them the Title. The *Heathens* had many Gods, but *Israel* was commanded to have but one; *i. e.* to worship none besides him.---Were not the Tabernacle and Temple consecrated solely to the Honour and Worship of the Lord *Jehovah*? They had but one Temple, and it was dedicated to the Worship of the one God. All their Sacrifices, all their Supplications, all their Offerings, all their Festivals, nay, every Part of the *Israelitish* Worship, was appropriated to the one God. We have no approved Example under the Law, of any Worship paid to Saints, or Angels, or any other Being, but God alone. There is no Precept or Precedent under the

Old Testament, which encourages any other Object of religious Worship but the true God.

2^d The Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ* hath made no Alteration in the Object of *Worship*.—

The Law of *Moses* had made the Worship of one God eternal and unchangeable: Who-soever pretended to seduce them from this, though they performed Signs and Wonders, *they were to be rejected, and punished with Death*^b.—How can a divine Law be altered, but by a new Revelation of the divine Will? How can that Revelation be supported, but by Miracles or Prophecy? In this Case Miracles and Prophecy are superseded. Because God himself expressly forbade them to hearken to any Prophet, whatever Signs or Wonders are wrought by him, if he taught the Worship of any but the Supreme Being, so it was impossible this Law should be altered. This Article is as fundamental to *Christianity*, as it was to the *Mosaic* Constitution. It is an unchangeable Law, which Christ and his Apostles have not in the least attempted to alter.

Our Saviour's Answer, before considered, his Direction to his Disciples, as a standing Rule of Supplication, (commonly called *the Lord's Prayer*) this teaches them to address to God only, as their *Father, who is in Heaven*^c. When the Apostle *Paul* charges the Heathens with Idolatry, it is upon this

^b Deut. xiii. at the Beginning.

^c Matt. vi. 9.

Account, as well as others ; that they joined the Worship of Creatures with that of the true God. *Who changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator,* (or with the Creator, as *παρὰ* signifies) *who is blessed for ever*^d. Does not this plainly shew, that the Worship of God will not excuse those from Idolatry, who worship anything besides him. If, with our Translation, we read it *more*, that denotes their more frequent Addresses to the Creature ; which directly condemns the *Romish* Practice of ten *Ave Mary's* for one *Pater-noster*. The Apostle declares it as the Sentiment of *Christians* in general: *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things*^e. The Apostacy of the latter Days, spoken of, *1 Tim.* iv. 1. is under this Character, as departing from the Faith, and giving Heed to seducing Spirits, and the Doctrine of Devils, or Dæmons, which signified, amongst the Heathens, a middle Sort of Beings betwixt God and Men, whom they regarded as Mediators, or Intercessors ; a Sort of inferior Deities, to whom, as such, they addressed their Supplications^f.

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^d Rom. i. 25.

^e 1 Cor. viii. 6.

^f How far the Practice of the *Romish* Worship suits this Prediction, the learned *Joseph Mede*, in a very distinct Manner, hath represented, p. 624. of his Works ; viz. The *Heathens* looked upon those Dæmons, as to their Nature, to be an inferior and middle Sort of Divine Powers, between the sovereign and heavenly

It is very evident, that the Gospel forbids Idolatry, without giving us any other Notion of it, than what appeared under the Law; so that no Alteration is made as to that Point in the least.

3^d The Form of the Command directing our Worship, absolutely excludes every other Object of it: *Thou shalt have no other God before me, or besides me.* This Prohibition absolutely forbids our paying divine Homage

Gods, and mortal Men. Their Office was to be as Mediators, or Agents, between them; their Original, to be the deified Souls of worthy Men after Death, and some of an higher Degree, which had no Beginning, nor ever were imprisoned in mortal Bodies. The Way to worship them, to find or receive Benefits from them, was by consecrated Images and Pillars, wherein they have and retain their Presence at Devotions, to be given them, to adore their Reliques, and to build Temples for them. Having largely explained these Things, and shewn their Resemblance with the *Romish* Practice, in worshipping Saints, and Images, and Reliques, he sums up all in this Application, p. 641.

That the Doctrine of Dæmons comprehends, in a most express Manner, the whole Idolatry of the Mystery of Iniquity, the deifying and invoking of Saints and Angels, the bowing down to Images, the worshipping of Crosses, as new idol Columns, the adoring and templing of Reliques, the worshipping of any other visible Thing, upon Supposal of any Divinity therein. What Copy was ever so like the Sample, as all this to the Doctrine of Dæmons?

Nay, he further observes, that the Advancers of Saint-worship in the Beginning, did not only see this Resemblance, but even gloried that they had a Thing in Christian Practice, so like the Doctrine of Dæmons.

to any other Being : It is a negative Command, plainly declaring what we shall not do.

Positive Commands never lose their Authority, but we are not obliged, in all Differences of Time and Circumstances, to the Performance of the Duties enjoined. Negative Commands are always obligatory, because what is absolutely forbidden is never to be done. Now what is forbid, without the least Reserve or Limitation, is absolutely forbid. In not doing a Thing, there are no Degrees or Variation as to Circumstances. To offer up divine Worship to any other, besides the living and true God, is to act directly contrary to this express Prohibition.

4th The multiplying the Objects of religious Worship, are of no Advantage to promote a more refined or exalted State of Religion. Has it not a natural Tendency to raise mean and low Sentiments of the divine Nature; weak and childish Apprehensions of the Supreme Being; as if he was liable to the Passions and Infirmities of earthly Princes; as if he was more ready to distribute Blessing at the Intercession of a Saint or Angel, than from his own Love to Goodness; as if some of his Creatures had gained a Kind of Ascendancy, and could extort Favours from the most high? Is this a fit Idea to be encouraged of the great God?

A Mediator of Redemption, (as one well observes) is very consistent with all the Perfections

fections of the divine Nature, and does very much recommend both the Wisdom and Goodness of God to the World. When Mankind had transgressed the Laws of their Creation, and forfeited all Right to the Favour of their Creator, they could expect nothing from God but in a Way of Covenant and Promise, through a Mediator. None so fit to be our Mediator as he who is our Ransom too. He hath redeemed us by his Blood; he has ratified the Covenant; he ever lives to make Intercession for us. Hereby the Honour of the supreme Legisslator is maintained, and the Happiness of each returning Sinner secured. Thus the Perfections of God appear most illustrious; but Mediators of pure Intercession, and our Addresses to them, plainly intimate, as if we imagined the most high stood in Need of such repeated Applications, that there was some Deficiency either in the divine Wisdom, or Goodness, or Remembrance.

Is this the Way to a more refined or exalted State of Religion? No! The Perfection of that is always in Proportion to the Knowledge we have of God. The more weak and imperfect Apprehensions we form of God, the more imperfect our State of Religion; the multiplying the Objects of Worship multiplies these weak Apprehensions, so cannot tend to a more refined State of Religion.

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It is an Argument of a mere abject Mind, to pay divine Honours to a Fellow-Creature; it is debasing ourselves as much below the Dignity of our Natures, as we advance them above it. Mean Objects of Worship do more debase the Soul than any other Submissions: The more our Dependencies are, the meaner, and the more imperfect our State of Religion.

Besides, the greatest Perfection of Religion consists in the nearest and most immediate Approach to God, that our State will admit. This is the perfect State which *Jesus* has introduced: *We may now go boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in every Time of Need*^z. Having this Freedom of Access through him, by one Spirit, unto the Father, what Occasion have we to go round about, by the Shrines and Altars of numerous and unknown Saints, to the Throne of God.

In short, ought not the divine Honour to be intended by all religious Worship; what most redounds to that is most excellent. Now giving the whole Glory must be more than giving a Part of it, unless a Part be equal to the Whole, or we can pay Part of it to a Creature, and yet give the Whole to God? It is very evident, if any religious Worship is paid to Saints and Angels, then God has not the Whole, and therefore is not so much honoured as if he had. Is there not some Degree

^z Heb. iv. 16.

of Hope, or Trust, in those who address to Saints? If not it seems, entirely impertinent to apply to them. If there is, then so far apart of our Hope is taken off from God, and placed upon a Creature, is it not more honourable to trust in, and pray to God alone? Thus, in whatever View we consider this exalted State of Religion, we find the multiplying the Objects of Worship has no Tendency to promote it.

5th There is no Precedent in the Word of God, to give the least Encouragement to this Worship.

When *Abraham* bowed himself towards the Ground, before the three Men^h, it was only an Expression of civil Respect; nor is there any Circumstance in the Relation, that would teach us to conclude, it was any Thing more than the Reverence customarily paid in that Country from Man to Man.

If any Thing more was intended by *Lot's* Behaviour, (which it is not easy to prove,) yet his directing his Request to one of the Angels, intimates, that he might look upon him as one of a superior Nature, stiled, the Angel of the Covenant, or the Son of God. If that was his Opinion, it furnishes us with a sufficient Reason for his Homageⁱ.

The Instance of *Balaam's* Prostration before the Angel^k, is very little to the Purpose, because it cannot from hence be proved, that

^h Gen. xviii. 2. ⁱ Gen. xix. 9. ^k Numb. xxii. 31.
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the Honour he paid was religious.—If that could be made out, the Behaviour of one whose Character appears so very bad, will not be deemed sufficient to make a Precedent.

When *Joshua* fell upon his Face before the Captain of the Host of the Lord¹, he had just Reason for it, as appears from the Title he gives him^m; *Jehovah*, God's peculiar Name.

Who would be fond of imitating *Saul's* Example, when he bowed before the Appearance of *Samuel*, let his Design be what it would? Can it be imagined that *Obadiab*, the Governor, falling on his Face before the Prophet *Elijah*, had any Thing of religious Worship in itⁿ.

We read of *Nebuchadnezzar's* worshipping the Prophet *Daniel*^o, and commanding that they should offer an Oblation and sweet Odours unto him. This might be only honorary, and a just Respect shewn to the extraordinary Qualifications of the Prophet, being no more than Gifts, or Presents.—If this was the Case, the Instance is entirely foreign to their Purpose. If these were proper Sacrifices, they were offered by a *Heathen* Prince, whose Pattern the *Christian* will not be fond of imitating. Had the Prophet accepted them as such, that might have given some Encouragement to our paying the same Reverence to Men; but the sacred History no-where says he did.

¹ Josh. v. 15.

^m Josh. vi. 2.

ⁿ 1 Kings xviii. 7.

^o Dan. ii. 46.

For the Invocation of Angels, the Practice of the Patriarch *Jacob* is urged ; who prays to the Angel to bless the Sons of *Joseph*^p. It is not certain that this Request was offered in a Way of solemn Prayer, but only expressed as a Wish. If we allow it to be a Prayer, it might not be addressed to the Angel, but to God, that he would appoint the same Angel which had preserved him, to bless them.

If it was offered to the Angel, it was to the Angel which had redeemed him from all Evil, with whom he strove for the Blessing, and whom he styles God^q. Some of the Fathers thought this Angel to be the Son of God. Take the Instance which Way you please, it affords no Precedent for this Worship.—

To mention the Pity of *Job's* Friends as an Argument for this Purpose, is no better than trifling with the sacred Writings.

For the Invocation of Saints, what is most insisted on, are those Texts of Scripture wherein good Men on Earth are commanded to pray for one another. These are various in the Old and New Testament, but nothing to the Point.

It is acknowledged that the sacred Scriptures do plainly represent it as the Duty of *Christians* to pray one for another. For wise Reasons this was appointed. It has a natural Tendency to express their mutual Love and genuine Sympathy. It is happily adapted to pre-

^p Gen. xlviii. 16.

^q Gen. xxxii. 30.

serve the Unity of the Body, to support public Worship, and advance the Honour of Religion. But what Encouragement does this give to the Invocation of Saints, suppose we could assign no Difference between praying to Saints in Heaven, and desiring the Prayers of such on Earth, there might appear some Shadow of Argument; but the Difference is plain, the latter makes them our Fellow-Suppliants, the former our Mediators, or Intercessors; the one is only a friendly Request, the other a solemn Invocation, with all the Circumstances of religious Worship. Is it not a very different Thing to desire a Christian Friend to pray for me, and in a solemn Manner to invoke an Angel or Saint to bless me? Is it not very different for us to desire the Prayers of good Men on Earth, who hear us, and know our Condition, and pray to Saints in Heaven, who cannot hear us; and, for any Thing we know, are ignorant of our State? The Difference is so notorious, that it is really surprizing any should pretend to draw such a Conclusion from it.

Thus, upon Enquiry, it appears, there is no Precedent in the Word of God, that gives the least Encouragement to this Worship. Now, where we have not only an express Command against paying religious Homage to any but the true God, and no Sort of Precedent to the contrary in the sacred Record, upon what Foundation can we indulge that volun-

tary Humility, or worshipping of Angels, which the Apostle *Paul* so expressly condemns: *Let no Man beguile you of your Reward, in a voluntary Humility and worshipping of Angels, intruding into those Things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly Mind, not holding the Head*^r. According to this Representation we may conclude, the Apostle looked upon it as a dangerous Error, arising from the Vanity of a fleshly Mind, whereby they were drawn off from that Regard due to the one Mediator, the Head of the Church; and so in Danger of losing the Reward annexed to a Stedfastness in their Christian Profession. If the worshipping of Angels is a forsaking the Head, and an Evidence of a corrupt Mind, sure the Saints, Beings of an inferior Rank and Capacity, will pretend no Claim to it.

6th All the Advantages of religious Worship are obtained by directing it to this one proper Object, — the only living and true God.

It cannot be denied that the great God is as well acquainted at least with our State, as any of the heavenly Inhabitants; that he is as able to relieve; that he is as much disposed to do it, we may conclude from his infinite Power, and immense Goodness. His Ear is open to the Cry of the Humble; we may be assured he is apprized of all our Wants. Is not this a readier Way to obtain the Blessings we de-

^r Col. ii. 18.

fire? The making Application to this, or the other Saint, or Angel, is going round about, when, through *Jesus*, we have an immediate Access to the Throne of God. He is a safe, an infallible Way, unto the Father: As such, he is appointed by infinite Wisdom. Shall any be so vain as to imagine they have found out a more convenient one? Who so fit to present our imperfect Homage to a holy God, as the great High-priest of our Profession, who hath an unchangeable Priesthood? *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*^f. How unnecessary, how impertinent must it be, to employ Saints or Angels in a Service the Son of God hath undertaken? If he is able fully to accomplish the Design; if he is constantly engaged in the bringing of it to Perfection; what Occasion can there be to apply to any other? It appears as an Indignity put upon Christ's Mediation, either as insufficient in itself, or as if he was backward to the Work; which is aggravated Ingratitude even to suspect.

Besides, what Disadvantage can arise from our Neglect of these Intercessors? Shall we not be as soon heard, and obtain as much Relief without them, since Jesus is able to save to the uttermost? What if it should appear in the next World (as one observes, for he is persuaded it will never appear so in this,)

^f Heb. vii. 24, 25.

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that we were mistaken, and were over-nice and curious in refusing this Homage to Saints and Angels ; yet ours is a much more innocent and pardonable Mistake, than that which the *Romanists* are guilty of, if they are mistaken. We are only wanting in some religious Courtship, which we might innocently have given to Saints and Angels, but were not bound to give it by any divine Command. Our Refusal therefore is no Sin against God ; and as our Neglect is not owing to any designed Contempt or Disregard of those excellent Spirits, but to a Reverence for God, and a Jealousy of his Honour. If it were a Fault, we need not doubt but God would pardon it ; and all good Spirits, who have such a profound Veneration for God, will easily excuse the Rudeness or Incivility for so good a Reason. Thus the Favour of God, the Friendship of these perfected Spirits, or the Blessings we seek, will not be in the least endangered by this Omission ; nay, all the advantageous Influence and Success of religious Worship will be effectually secured this Way, as might be shewn in each Particular. But sufficient hath been offered, to make it evident to every impartial Person, that the paying religious Worship to any besides the living and true God, is contrary to the Direction given in his Word, can be of no real Advantage to Religion, but tends to debase it, and
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is quite unnecessary to obtain the Blessings we desire.

III^d We are to shew what Obligations we are under thus to serve the Most High.

1st The Excellencies of his Nature give him a Right to this Homage. All that can be desired in the Object of our most humble Adorations are found in him ; unerring Wisdom, almighty Power, and immense Goodness. He is the Standard of all Perfection, and Fountain of all Blessing, without the least Variation, or Shadow of turning : Our God is perfect, without the least Defect to discourage our Hope. Here is every Qualification to encourage our Homage. He knows all Things, is every-where present, ready to hear the Voice of the humble, able to relieve all our Wants, out of his abundant Fulness, and takes Pleasure in the Display of his Goodness. He is rich in Mercy to all that call upon him in Truth. How amiable an Object of our most profound Reverence and ardent Affection. Let stupid Ignorance bow before the senseless Stock ; let blind Superstition cringe before a Creature who is not able to hear its Cries, or supply its Wants : Sure we, who know the living God, cannot think of serving any other : All other Excellencies vanish like Stars before the Rising-Sun ? Who is to be compared with him ? Who is fit to bear a Share in that Homage which is offered to him ? It

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is an Indignity to join any other with him, who alone is worthy to be praised. His Name is Holy: From everlasting to everlasting he is God.

2^d The Bounties of his Administration demand it.

Gratitude teaches us to direct our Reverence, Dependance, and Acknowledgement, to the Object from whence we receive all our Blessings. In God we live, and move, and have our Being, both the *Pagan* and *Christian* World readily own. As from his Power we at first received our Existence, so from his Providence we derive every Supply. All the agreeable Enjoyments of this present State are his Gift: All we have, and all we hope for, depend upon his Kindness: Therefore to him should all the Glory be ascribed.

How unreasonable is it to give the least Share of that Honour to another! It is injurious to our gracious Benefactor: As he is the Fountain of Life, he should be the sole Object of our grateful Ascriptions. Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, nor to any of thy Creatures, but to thy Name be the Glory. This is our reasonable Service: *For his Kingdom ruleth over all*^t. The Variations here below are all subject to his Direction; for he does what he pleases in the Army of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of this Earth; all Things are disposed ac-

^t Psalm ciii. 19.

according to the Counsel of his own Will." It is then but Justice to his gracious Administration, thankfully to ascribe every Benefit received to him alone.

3^d The Word of God expressly enjoins it.

Here is an Obligation which will be of great Weight with all that acknowledge the sacred Revelation. The Will of God ought to be the constant Rule of our Obedience. Who so fit to direct the Homage of his Creatures, as he that formed them? As he requires from us this singular Regard, to deny it is to trample upon his Authority. As he graciously accepts it, would it not be gross Ingratitude to refuse it?

A Command so reasonable, so equitable in itself, appointed by one who has an incontestable Right to our Obedience, to vary from it must be highly criminal. A Command so solemnly declared, so frequently repeated, so distinctly expressed, in every Age of the Church, and so strenuously insisted upon by the great God, surely ought to be exactly observed. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another; neither my Praise to graven Images*". Shall we presume to encroach upon what he claims as a distinguishing Part of his Prerogative? Shall we pretend to understand his Precept better than he himself? Or dare to explain away the Sense of it? As the sovereign Lord of all, he requires us to serve him, and him alone, in

" Isaiah xlii. 8.

a Way of Worship: Are we not under the strictest Obligation punctually to comply with it?

4th The Promises of his Grace encourage it.

These kind Declarations of infinite Love were made for this Purpose, that the transcendent Glory of the Supreme Being might not prevent our humble Application.

We have now Boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus: By a new and living Way he hath consecrated for us, through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh^w. We may draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith; for he is faithful, who hath promised. There is no Need of any Angel or Saint to introduce us to the Throne of God, or present our Petitions for us: We have free Access through a Mediator, and may be assured of a gracious Acceptance, having the Word of the God of Truth to depend upon. These Promises are all confined to the Worship of one Object, there is not the least Intimation as to any other; not one Promise in the sacred Volume, that either directly, or indirectly, refers to any other. This will appear at the first View, to every impartial Observer. I do not know they have the Assurance to claim any one, as favouring the Worship they are so fond of. The Divine Presence and Blessing are appropriated to that religious Service which is offered to God, in Obedience to his Command, and according to his Direction.

^w Heb. x. 19, 20.

Shall we not then think ourselves under the strongest Obligations to an exact Compliance with it. For any to busy themselves in contriving other Ways of addressing the Majesty of Heaven and Earth, than what he has encouraged, looks like a Suspicion of the Way prescribed, and is actually a Slight put upon the Encouragement given.

The Ties of Gratitude should engage us to make a right Use of those kind Declarations. As we have the Word of Truth to support our Hope, we may be thoroughly satisfied in our Homage. Thus the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, the Bounties of his Administration, the express Injunction of his Word, require it, and the Promises of his Grace greatly encourage our worshipping the Lord our God, and him only.

We shall conclude with some Reflections.

1st We learn the proper Notion of Idolatry.

It is paying religious Worship to any other besides the Lord our God.—*Him only shalt thou serve.* He who denies this Homage to the true God is profane: He that addresses it to any other is an Idolater. Let them therefore see to it, who seem to take Pleasure in multiplying the Objects of Worship, lest, under the Pretence of Reverence, they do not affront the most high. God will admit no Partners in the sacred Homage. Let us cautiously avoid every Appearance of what is so hateful in his Sight, and keep at the utmost Distance from Idolatry.

2^d This should lead us to a serious and impartial Enquiry into our own Conduct.

You may have a sovereign Contempt of all that indecent and superfluous Homage which is paid to Saints and Angels, to Images, or Relicks: But have we no Idol? Is our Reverence and Esteem, our Love and Dependance, our Service and Obedience, directed to their true Object? Is there no Rival, no Competitor with God, in our Hearts? Where do we place our Happiness? This will discover what we chiefly honour and Esteem. Hath some earthly Enjoyment this Preference in our Hearts? This is our Idol.

When the *Danites* had spoiled the House of *Micah*, and taken away the Ephod, the Teraphim, the graven and molten Images, he cries after them, *Ye have taken away my Gods: What have I more*^{*}? Have you nothing more to depend upon, or delight in, but these visible Enjoyments? Where is your Confidence placed? Is it in the Name of the Lord, or in an Arm of Flesh? When Difficulties surround you, then you may seek unto God for Relief: When second Causes fail, you may have Recourse to the first: But in the Day of Prosperity, where is your Dependance then? Is it not fixed upon your Treasure? Are you not inclined to act as the Fool in the Parable speaks: *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up, for many Years: Take thine Ease; eat, drink, and be merry*^y. Do we trust in

^{*} Judges xviii. 24.

^y Luke xii. 19.

uncertain Riches, and say to the fine Gold,
Thou art our Confidence: This is our Idol.

What is the chief Object of our Love? Are we Lovers of Pleasure, more than Lovers of God? May we not then be said to idolize them? Every inordinate Affection to present Things, allowed and encouraged, is giving them that Place in the Heart which belongs to God. Covetousness is stiled Idolatry by the Apostle *Paul*². Let us make an impartial Scrutiny. — Judge not by the Violence or Impetuosity of your Affections. Sensual Passions will produce Hurry and Disorder in the Soul. The Love of God is a regular and refined Passion; and therefore will occasion no such Confusion. Judge not of yourselves by particular Frames, or when under peculiar Circumstances. What is the governing Temper of your Minds? What is your deliberate and prevailing Determination? Have you a real Aversion to Sin, as offensive to God? Is Holiness your Delight? Is it your great Concern to please God; and you account his Favour as Life, and his Loving-Kindness better than Life? This shews his Pre-eminence in your Hearts.

3^d What Reason have we to admire the Divine Condescension, who has given such Encouragement to our Worship?

What are all our Ascriptions of Glory to the most high, when compared with the divine Excellency? Our best Acknowledge-

² Col. iii. 5.

ments are like the Lisplings of an Infant's Speech, unworthy, altogether unworthy, of the divine Regard. Yet such is the divine Condescension, that these are not only commanded, but honoured and accepted as a glorifying of God. Shall we not then delight in the sacred Service, and rejoice in the Opportunity of paying our Homage?

Let us bow before the Lord, our Maker. Let us come into his Courts with Praise: For the Lord is good, his Mercy is everlasting, and his Truth endureth to all Generations.

4th How ready should we be, by all proper Methods, to promote the Honour of him whom we profess to serve. The great God stands in no Need of our Homage: He requires it for our Advantage, that we may be duly impressed with a Sense of our constant Dependance upon him, and Obligations to him; that we may be animated in the Observation of his Will, from which our Happiness naturally arises, and may be incited to imitate the bright Pattern of our heavenly Father, whose tender Mercies are over all his Works.

Is it not a very proper Method to answer this Design, to have Children instructed in their Duty to God and Man? Now a fair Opportunity offers.

By contributing to the Support of this Charity-School, you may be instrumental in preserving many from the imminent Dangers which attend Ignorance and Superstition.

The

The PRESENT STATE of the SCHOOL.

“ The *Foundation* of this School was in
 “ the Year 1687, in the Reign of King
 “ *James the Second*, when a School was set
 “ up by one *Poulton*, a Jesuit; and public
 “ Notice given, that he would instruct the
 “ Children of the Poor *gratis*. Upon which
 “ Mr. *Arthur Shallet*, Mr. *Samuel Warbur-*
 “ *ton*, and Mr. *Ferdinando Holland*, all
 “ Members of this Church, in the Reverend
 “ Mr. *Nathaniel Vincent*’s Time, laid the
 “ Foundation of this School, to avoid the
 “ dangerous Consequences of a *Popish School*,
 “ and to provide for the Instruction of the
 “ Poor in the *Protestant Way*.

“ The Number of Scholars at first was
 “ Forty, afterwards increased to Fifty, and
 “ now to One Hundred and Forty. They
 “ are taught to Read, Write, and Cypher,
 “ and are also instructed in the *Assembly’s Ca-*
 “ *techism*, and thereby qualified for the Ser-
 “ vice of *God and Man*.

“ It may be said to be the first School the
 “ *Protestant Dissenters* were concerned in.
 “ Here Objects are received, without Distinct-
 “ ion of Parties; the general Good being in-
 “ tended. It is situated in one of the poorest
 “ Parts about the City; and the Children of
 “ the poorest Sort of Watermen, Fishermen,
 “ and others, are here taught, without any
 “ Expence to their Parents; and are furnished
 “ with

“ with *Bibles, Testaments, Catechisms, Writing-Books, and Cyphering-Books.*

“ The Charges have been defrayed by the
 “ *Gifts and Subscriptions* of private Persons,
 “ with an Annual Collection in this Place, on
 “ this Day, and one in the City; together
 “ with the kind Remembrance of the said
 “ School, by some, in their *last Wills.*”

I hope you are now met to encourage so generous and useful a Design; a Design attended with very considerable Expence, which calls for your liberal Assistance. Can any of you be backward to contribute to a Charity so excellent in itself, and so beneficial in its Consequences. Hereby a Number of necessitous Children are trained up in Knowledge, and have the Privilege of a religious Education, who might otherwise have been left to wander in the Streets, and grow up in Ignorance and Vice, and so become a Burthen to that Community to which now they may be useful. Would you honour God with your Substance? Would you relieve many distressed Families, and train up Children in the Ways of real Religion? Improve the present Opportunity, and thus offer an acceptable Homage to the Living God.

The E N D.



A N
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

B Y
J O H N A N G U S ; 7,

Mr. F E L L's
CONFESSION of FAITH;

A
C H A R G E

B Y
THOMAS DAVIDSON;

AND A
S E R M O N

B Y
THOMAS TOWLE, B.D.

ALL DELIVERED AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE
Rev. Mr. J O H N F E L L,
In THAXTED, ESSEX, October 24th, 1770.

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